

## ***NNSA NEWS***

Los Alamos Field Office

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# **Aerial Survey Finds No Increase in Background or Man-made Radioactivity for Los Alamos Area**

Measurements from two recent aerial flyovers to determine the presence of background and man-made radioactivity brought good news for Los Alamos County and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

The radiological surveys, conducted in August 2011 and June 2012, found that radioisotopes and their associated exposure rates are consistent with those expected from normal background radiation.

“These surveys were well worth the effort,” said Juan Griego, Acting Manager for the Los Alamos Field Office. “The results are good news and the information will benefit the lab and the community for years to come as we work toward cleanup and sustainability.”

The 2011 survey focused on the White Rock community and Los Alamos National Laboratory, over which a specially equipped helicopter from Nevada’s Remote Sensing Lab flew approximately 150 feet above ground to gather radiological data.

The 2012 survey concentrated on the Los Alamos town site. That survey gathered data from 300 feet above the ground in order to limit noise to residents and animals, specifically the horses on North Mesa. Measurements taken from the flyover are equivalent to measurements taken from 1 meter above ground.

The survey provided valuable data in several areas. First, the information updates a radiological survey conducted in 1994. Secondly, the survey showed the Las Conchas fire from 2011 did not impact background radiation levels. It also provides additional confirmation that the Rendija Canyon area remains at natural background radiation levels. There is an area north of Rendija Canyon under evaluation for return to public use.

“The survey results provide additional confirmation about the quality of the environment around Los Alamos,” said Jeff Mousseau, associate director of environmental programs for Los Alamos National Laboratory. “As we continue our environmental cleanup and restoration efforts, we’re hopeful that survey results like this will help the public feel confident about the seriousness of our commitment to protecting people and the environment.”

The information will be incorporated into the lab’s Long-Term Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Strategy. The strategy integrates environmental protection activities into a comprehensive environmental stewardship plan to clean up the past, control current operations and move toward a sustainable future where waste is minimized and effects on the environment are reduced or eliminated. For more information, visit <http://www.lanl.gov/projects/envplan/>